

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 15 and 16 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-5, 15 and 16 are amended. Support for the amendments to claims 1-5, 15 and 16 may be found at least at paragraphs [0005] and [0051]-[0067] of the specification and in Figs. 3 and 4. No new matter is added. In view of at least the following, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representative by Examiner Fletcher in the September 1, 2009 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0008725 A1 (Katsuragi). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that Katsuragi teaches each and every feature of claims 1-5, 15 and 16. As discussed and agreed to during the personal interview, Applicant respectfully submits that Katsuragi fails to at least teach:

- "suctioning... from the liquid droplet ejection head by the suction unit... the water being removed from the passage... the first solvent being removed from the passage," as recited in claim 1;
- "suctioning... from the liquid droplet ejection head by the suction unit... the predetermined storage solution being removed from the passage... the first solvent being removed from the passage... the second solvent being removed from the passage," as recited in claim 2;

- "suctioning... from the liquid droplet ejection head by the suction unit... the first solvent being removed from the passage... the second solvent being removed from the passage... the water being removed from the passage," as recited in claim 4;
- "suctioning... from the liquid droplet ejection head by the suction unit... the first solvent being removed from the passage... the second solvent being removed from the passage... the third solvent being removed from the passage," as recited in claim 5; and
- "suctioning... from the liquid droplet ejection head by the suction unit... the water being removed from the passage... the first solvent being removed from the passage," as recited in claim 16.

By this amendment, the phrase "functional solution" has been replaced with "ink solution." As discussed and agreed to during the personal interview, the presently claimed "ink solution" is differentiated from water. Thus, the presently claimed "ink solution" would not be construed by one of ordinary skill in the art to refer to water.

On pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Office Action asserts that "general means for generating a pressure differential between the supply of solution and ejected solution" would disclose the presently claimed features because "the water is ejected from the head of Katsuragi, there exists some suction, which serves to draw the water through the head, thus reading on the claimed suction and suction unit." By this amendment, the claims have been amended to recite that the suction unit performs functions to "remove" a variety of solutions. As discussed and agreed to during the personal interview, Katsuragi does not teach the presently claimed features because Katsuragi does not "remove" as presently claimed.

For at least the above reasons, independent claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 16 are not anticipated and would not have been rendered obvious by Katsuragi.

Claim 3 depends from claim 1, and claim 15 depends from claim 2. Because the applied reference fails to anticipate or render obvious the features recited in independent claims 1 and 2, dependent claims 3 and 15 are patentable for at least the reasons that claims 1 and 2 are patentable, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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